

# RURALITIES

The world's main environmental challenge is climate change, and climate change mitigation and adaptation are globally identified as necessary societal practices related to Sustainable Development Goals. The role of rural communities here is to create more resilient ecosystems, protect the environment and conserve nature while pursuing goals of competitive development.

The new Horizon Europe project, which is implemented by the Institute for Development and Innovation, "Climate-smart, ecosystem-enhancing, and knowledge-based rural expertise and training centers" (RURALITIES), has the aim to empower rural actors and increase their capacities for change by exploiting innovative knowledge and technologies for the benefit of rural communities.

The project is being implemented by the consortium, which is consisted of 52 partner organisations, in 6 European countries (Italy, United Kingdom, Slovenia, Spain, and Romania) with significant implications for numerous European countries, participating Associated Countries, and African Union countries.

The main aim of the RURALITIES project is to increase the capacity of rural areas to transform themselves towards sustainable, productive, climate-neutral and resilient agricultural

systems by providing the best available knowledge, capacity-building mechanisms, digital technology, nature-based, social and community-led innovations, as well as policy recommendations showing necessary steps to raise their innovative potential.

The role of the Institute for Development and Innovation is to lead one of the most challenging processes (engaging, connecting, and empowering actors of the rural scene), aid in management, and develop various methodological frameworks including the following tasks:

1. Co-create the Citizen Sensing system (part of the project monitoring framework);
2. Develop system thinking methodology to define rural challenges;
3. Create the 'Citizen Rural Sensing' citizen science monitoring framework and mobile app;
4. Identify and structure innovation projects;
5. Practice counseling and guidance to selected initiatives;
6. Generate the learning pathways integration and deployment programme;
7. Establish RURALITIES training centers.

